

A Response to Ed Prins-Stairs

This is a written response to a document created by Ed Prins-Stairs, previously known as "Spax3" and currently going by the Twitter username, "PowerHoodz", in which he misrepresents our relationship and downplays the harm that he has caused me and many others. In this document, I will be telling my side of the story and clarifying areas that Ed intentionally left vague to save himself from humiliation.

Content warning; mental abuse, self-harm, suicide, transphobia, homophobia, racism, gaslighting, stalking and threats.

Let me make it clear that I do not wish for anyone to go attack this person. I simply wish to set the record straight as he continues to spread harmful misinformation, twisting and exaggerating certain particular truths while neglecting or downplaying his own bad behaviour in these situations. I am not a fan of cancel culture. I'm not asking him to "take accountability". I simply want him to move on with his life and stop harassing me and others over two-year old drama.

With that out of the way, here is my side of things.

1. From Fan To Friend

These first two parts summarize how I first met Ed and became a part of his website. You can skip these if you just want to see the rebuttal to his accusations.

Back in the year 2007, I became a fan of the Sonic the Hedgehog video game series after getting my Playstation 2 and a copy of Sonic Heroes. As a Sonic fan, I'd go on to YouTube and browse the various Sonic related videos and that is when I first saw Ed (Spax3) and his review of Sonic and the Secret Rings, as well as his many other reviews. I was a pre-teen at the time and didn't understand the full extent of all the drama surrounding him or the reputation that he had online at the time. I just want to enjoy his videos and I wish he'd preserved them for nostalgia's sake instead of removing them from the Internet, despite everything else I'm about to get into shortly.

Two years later, in 2009, I had just started high school. I became familiar with a program called Skype which I could use to talk to fellow Sonic fans and sprite artists. On Deviantart, I reached out to Ed and asked if he had Skype. I recall asking him why he didn't like Death Note. He added me straight away and we got to talking. He answered my questions in a friendly manner and all I could think was, "Oh my gosh. A YouTuber I really enjoy is talking to me!"

Being 13 years old, I didn't have a full grasp on the toxic nature of parasocial relationships. That is not to say that making friends with YouTubers is bad. It's simply highlighting the power dynamic between a fan and their favorite creator. Not to mention, the age gap. At the time, I was just happy to get to know him. He was a fun friend to talk to and he'd make funny jokes that made me laugh. I still look back on those days fondly.

A few years later, at the age of 15, I was in an online relationship with my then-boyfriend, Jonah (or "SpikeHedgelion8"). It was cliché teenage young love. Completely out of nowhere, Ed confessed having feelings for me. This was particularly annoying because I'd already had a bit of experience from people (mainly cis men) confessing feelings for me when I was already taken. Because of how much I cared for him, I wanted to let him down easily. Admittedly, I did lowkey have feelings for him as well, but the age difference alone should have made it clear that was a bad idea to pursue. I finally gathered the guts to tell Ed that I wanted to be with Jonah.

I thought he'd take it well, but he ended up being really upset. Ultimately, I thought we could put it aside, but he continued to have feelings for me and continued pressing the issue despite me making it clear that I didn't want that kind of relationship with him. Ed would start writing me poems and sending me gifts, which I didn't mind at the time, because I still viewed him as a friend. Other friends were starting to tell me that they thought Ed was being manipulative or controlling and every single time, I would get defensive on Ed's behalf and defend his behavior. I looked up to him so much that I had developed this idea that he was just misunderstood and any warnings from others were just people who weren't giving him a chance. This only got worse over time.

2. Love Triangle

He would go on to recruit me for his website, The Game Toon Zone. I would do interviews with the My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic voice actors and writers with him. According to his post, he says I kept interrupting and "wanting the spotlight". It was so long ago, but to my knowledge, this isn't true. I tried to be quiet and do the right thing by Ed and if I messed up in some way during those interviews, it was not malicious. Ed interpreting mistakes as maliciousness would become a pattern. He always had high expectations of me and it was becoming more demanding over time. This was all work I did as his friend, keep in mind. Not paid work. I confess that sometimes I'd get frustrated and start crying and yelling, though this was when he was being especially harsh toward me and I did not know how to take it. It's not an excuse, of course. But, something clearly wasn't working. At one stage, he wanted to see me on webcam crying so he could know to feel bad for making me upset which really messed with my head. I typically wanted to avoid webcam video for the longest time. I didn't like seeing myself talking on camera.

In 2013, I was 17 years old and my mum got offered to go to San Fransisco on a work-related trip. We took the offer to go to America. I finally got to meet Jonah, as well as my friends, Chris and Jon. I also got to meet Ed who first hugged me as soon as he saw me and had a camera with him. He'd take that camera everywhere during the trip which made me anxious that my face was going to end up on his YouTube channel for the reasons I stated early. I was pretty insecure at the time. It was honestly very cool meeting Ed and he was fun to be around. He was even there for me while I was sick and never left my side. However, at all times, my mum and her partner were there keeping an eye on us. One might argue that this is "sheltering", but they did that cause they didn't want Ed to do anything bad to me. While the meet was fun, there was some awkward moments and some conflict.

In 2014, I turned 18. I was starting to go to TAFE and had made a couple of new friends. Ed was starting to say that I wasn't giving him as much affection anymore. The spark between me and Jonah was started to fade, so we broke it off on mutual terms and I took this as an opportunity to break off the love triangle once and for all. Ed continued to act lovey-dovey, even though I made

it absolutely clear I wasn't interested.

May 29, 2014. I fell in love with Scotty and we started dating. Ed did not take the news very well at all. In a fit of anger, he claimed "I knew nothing about love". His reasoning, at the time, was that I supposedly rushed into a relationship with Scotty, but it was more likely that he hadn't moved on from his feelings for me. It was not his place or business to tell him how to live my life, but thankfully, he would eventually move on and started dating Kristen. I thought things could finally be peaceful between us again.

3. Cracks Begin To Form

While we were still friends and still enjoyed each other's company, there were good and bad moments through-out. Looking at the big picture in retrospect, the various stresses, conflicts and demands hadn't actually changed much at all. When I came out as non-binary, he would still refer to me as a girl. When I tried to politely correct him, he'd say that "it didn't matter". If I pressed the issue, he'd claim that I was "playing the victim" whenever I expressed concerns about how he was treating me and this was something he did a lot. It was starting to become very mentally taxing and exhausting. I walked on eggshells in an attempt not to upset him, but the tiniest things would set him off.

He would get angry at me for being unavailable or wanting a break from him. I did all I could to be a good friend to him, even if it was to my own detriment, but it was never enough. If I couldn't cater to him a hundred percent of the time, he'd get angry. It got to a point where I was simultaneously dealing with the stress of defending Ed to my friends who were trying to warn me about him and also feeling mentally abused by Ed. I cried a lot. I was going through so much. I couldn't deal with the entitlement anymore. Nothing I ever did was ever good enough, but I still tried to be his friend despite it all.

Three years ago, I was going through a break-up with the boyfriend I had after Scotty who left me with major trauma. Ed, in his document, tried to use both these exes as a source, but not only are they irrelevant to his supposed grievances with me - but they're both unreliable - as one

admits to the just "messaging with Ed" and the other was, himself, rather abusive. Ed is grasping at straws to try and make me look bad and you can make anyone look bad if you twist the facts the way Ed does. He's made an art of it, honestly. Anyway, I was so mentally spent by this stage, I was just trying to deal with life one day at a time. Suddenly, he got mad at me because I "bailed" on a Nintendo Direct reaction video that he wanted to record when I had a job at the time. This partially pushed me into quitting my job because I didn't want Ed to react that way again. He was leaving no room for a life outside of him.

Now we get to the actual beginning of the drama Ed hasn't stopped talking about for the past two or three years. One day, I was taking a nap and I had woken up to a message from Ed. He was making an attempt at a joke saying, "I smell friend". Obviously an attempt to be quirky and cutesy. Still not quite awake yet, I just responded: "What? Why are you sniffing me?"

That was it. That was the domino that set off a chain reaction which I find myself repeatedly apologizing for to this very day. He was pissed. He says it made him feel completely awkward and "like he was being treated like a creep". He practically demanded an apology for his joke not landing. To recap, he made a joke. I, having just woken up, didn't get the joke right away... and that's why I'm so awful, apparently. I posted a vague Facebook status venting about the incident which seemed to piss him off further, so I deleted the status as well. He would start spam-calling me on Discord demanding to speak with me when I just wanted to be left alone. Eventually, I accepted the call, despite knowing it was a bad idea after some intense arguing, I said: "All you ever do is hurt me."

He didn't take this as an opportunity to reflect on his actions. He went the complete opposite route. Because anytime someone makes him feel bad about something he did, he finds a way to blame the other person and turn a non-issue into an issue. I did genuinely try to show in every possible way that I was sorry. I profusely apologized and after we settled things, my friends were getting worried. I tried, again, to defend Ed. Ed was convinced that my friends were being overprotective and that they always sided with me even when I was wrong and he said it so much that he'd even convinced me that it was true. So much so to the point that I actually got angry at my friends for criticizing Ed.

I tried really hard to get Ed and my other friends to get along, but he kept being argumentative, even when they were being civil with him. At one point, it seemed like he was making me choose between my IRL friends and him which scared me. The "Pokecord" incident was the cherry on top of the sundae for me and that's when I knew, on some level, that I had to cut him off.

March 2019. Me and Ed are friends again for the time-being and are sharing a Discord server as administrators. I was concerned that Ed was being too controlling and sure enough Ed would constantly take things into his own hands and change things around, upsetting and confusing some people. I had added a feature called Pokecord which was a bot that let you do battles and catch Pokemon on Discord. In a desperate attempt to fix an issue, Ed had gotten rid of Pokecord all together, basically telling me I could reinstate it at the start of the month. One of Ed's friends, Kenny, was not in the know and seemed saddened by the news of Pokecord's disappearance. I posted a sad emoji as to express that I understood the disappointment some people felt about it being gone. Ed interpreted this one emoji as "throwing him under the bus" and "vilifying him" and just generally reading too much into it. Once again, interpreting something mundane and inconsequential as being the worst possible betrayal.

He claimed that the previous server we had was handled poorly and that he had concerns that the rules were not strictly defined. Well, I mistakenly reinstated it a day earlier than Ed had intended and he freaked out yet again. I became self-loathing and depressed at this stage for my error to which Ed reacted to my anguish by accusing me of "playing the victim" and "being sheltered".

At one point I said something along the lines of: "I'd rather be dead than you all alone with no friends". Not the best phrasing, but the meaning behind the words was that Ed was beating himself up and I wanted him to know I cared, so I'd rather die than have him end up alone. He interpreted this as me trying to kill myself. I admit that I have been suicidal before, but me expressing those thoughts was never an attempt to manipulate anyone. Ed seems to be convinced that it was though. Being vulnerable with him was a mistake, I guess. He phrases it as a "suicide threat" and claims that I was only doing it because I "didn't get my way" when that couldn't be

further from the truth. He sends me images of him cutting his arm. His justification was that, "It would show me how bad self-harm was". But, he didn't need to do that.

Anyway, we decided that it was for the best if we both walked away from the situation and talk about it when things are less heated. At this point, my partner and some of my other friends were able to distract me for a while and as a result, I was feeling a lot better about myself. With a clearer mind and wanting to inform my IRL friends that I was going to be okay, I went to Facebook and posted the following status: "It's nice to finally feel relaxed again. Looking forward to the next few days of fun and good vibes." I had a pretty big weekend planned and I was actually looking forward to something nice for once. A pleasant distraction from all the negativity that had been clouding my mind for so long.

Ed would swiftly reply: "After what you did to me last night, I don't find that fair. I know this isn't the best thing to say, but you threw me under the bus and it ruined so much. You made me cut myself, you made me relapse in overdrinking, and you made me feel like I can't do anything responsible without being villified." Again, I didn't make Ed do anything. All I said was that I was worried Ed was being a bit too controlling and that it made me feel uncomfortable. But, it doesn't stop there. It keeps going.

"I was going to still support you and try to let things recover. But you make that whole "MY LIFE IS FUCKING AWESOME" post that I can see RIGHT AFTER you did what you did that lead me to cut myself and relapse into drinking for you? I've even tried to handle things like an adult with you, but you've made it so impossible that nothing can be solved like an adult? You have zero tact, zero responsibility, and zero compassion. So far, you've only shown me you care for yourself and not others, and all that matters to you is popularity, not integrity or morality.

With all this, how can I trust you. That last post you made on your Facebook threw
EVERYTHING AWAY!

I didn't post on my Facebook on how good anything got or how awesome things would be after our incident. Like you did originally, I posted I was upset so people knew how to approach me, but you, you just want positive attention without integrity. You wonder why I can't trust you

anymore? Your last post made me feel more betrayed than ever. You have zero tact and respect, so in return, I showed the same to you. Call it hypocritical if you want, but I KNEW what it was going in when I posted it to you. You don't seem to care about what you post at all with any acknowledgement.

You're not the same kind hearted and integral person I originally saw you and knew you to be. You're more selfish and apathetic then the good natured person you used to be. Now, all you want is your ego stroked as I see. So I don't see how I can trust you.”

4. Debunking The Accusations

There's a lot to unpack there. For some of you that might be reading, you may think I've left something out, but that's literally all it took to push Ed over the edge into becoming abusive, hostile and vitriolic, and as you can see, his language is carefully crafted to manipulate the reader into thinking something worse happened than it actually did. I'm sorry that me trying to cheer myself up during a horrible time offended you so much, but the world does not revolve around you. The fact Ed continues to try and use this one status against me to this day is very telling.

People can have a good time with their personal lives separate from you. You try to act as if this is "evidence" of me not caring about you, not giving you a spare thought. But it's the opposite.

What you're effectively saying here is that you wish trauma and distress on another human being. You don't want them to feel better. You want other people to suffer because you're suffering. This isn't "toxic positivity" as you call it. "Toxic positivity" is forcing someone to have a positive attitude when they're not happy. I was actually starting to, genuinely, feel a little bit better, but you crushed that. I can understand how in his state of mind, he twisted things, but once again - he's attributing malicious intent where there is none.

He would go on to self-harm a second time. This time sending me pictures of him cutting his face. He also sent this to my partner in an attempt to get him to show the pictures to me - and when my partner wouldn't, he'd email them to me from a new email address. The first time he sent me pictures of cuts on his arm to allegedly show me how bad self-harm was and the second

time he sent me pictures of cuts on his face to signify, and I quote, "that I was dead to him". It's like he'd come up with any reason he could to blame me for stuff he was doing to himself.

After I disassociated with him and blocked him on social media, he would start sending me harassing emails, repeatedly. He blamed me for his drinking and cutting. He'd call me names. He'd say I was dead to him. He'd hurl abuse after abuse at me. He'd tell a warped version of events to his friends to make me look like the bad guy. Whenever I blocked one of his email addresses, he'd make another email address. When he saw I wasn't responding to his email harassment, he'd donate a couple cents to me on PayPal so he could continue to send me harassing messages through PayPal. He'd try anything he could to scare me into silence.

Everything that I was afraid would happen if I cut off Ed ended up happening.

But, I was trying to move on with my life. I thought that if I could just move on and put Ed out of my mind, he would eventually do the same. But, he didn't. He continued his harassment for a very, very long time. One day, I vented on Facebook about the situation and my friend, Harley, reached out offering to mess with Ed as a sort-of revenge. Please keep in mind. Ed had been relentlessly attacking me over the aforementioned incidents for months by this point, so I was exhausted and was desperate for it to stop. Harley's prank would have involved setting up a fake profile for Ed on a gay dating site. A very 4chan-like prank. At the time, I was too emotionally unstable and upset to care, so I agreed. Anything to get him to stop the abuse. Ed has a screenshot of this exchange and it's his only "proof" that I'm the vile person he claims I am. Something ripped out of context during a moment of vulnerability. I shouldn't of even considered it for a second and ultimately, I never went through with it. I stopped Harley from doing it. It disgusts me and goes against my values as an LGBT+ person. It is because of this one screenshot, he refuses to respect my pronouns or refer to me as non-binary which gives me major dysphoria.

Shortly after these incidents, most of the members of The Game Toon Zone and some of Ed's closest friends disassociated with him for their own reasons. His girlfriend broke up with him due to feeling similar pressure from him despite explicitly telling him that she wasn't comfortable voice-acting. I would elaborate further, but those are not my stories to tell and have

little to do with me. So, that's my story. Ed wants me to take responsibility for a lot of things that boil down to misunderstandings at best and, at worst, intentional misrepresentations on his part. It's hard to know if he genuinely believes what he's saying to be true or if he's intentionally lying about these things to cause drama. It doesn't matter either way. The result is the same regardless.

The year is 2021 now. He is still saying awful racist and transphobic stuff on Twitter, comparing anybody he doesn't like to Trump, getting annoyed over gender diversity in Splatoon 3, etc. Two years after I last properly spoke to him and it's only now I've really been able to process what an awful, manipulative person he is and was. I did so much for him. I loved him like he was my own family. I did everything I could to be his friend. But, he was never happy and nothing I did was ever enough. He calls me selfish. He calls me childish. He calls me all sorts of vile things. At the end of the day, it's all projection. He cannot accept that he's the one who actually needs to take accountability and move on. You can't scrub the Internet clean of your past, but if you just focus on the things that make you happy, you'll be better in the grand scheme of things. Despite his repeated claims that he's taken responsibility for his actions and I have not, he's not actually taking any real responsibility for all the harm he's caused and only continues to cause harm to people that want nothing to do with him, baiting them into responding to drama he started from years ago and then when they simply state the facts, he plays the victim.

I'm not perfect. I'm not going to act as though I haven't screwed up a lot, myself. But the way Ed treats me and his other ex-friends is not deserved. Since going on medication, moving house and surrounding myself with better people, I'm living a much happier life. All I want for Ed is to do the same. Focus on your passions, create content, surround yourself with people you like. As much as I am hurt and traumatized by him, a part of me definitely still cares, a part of me wishes the best for him and a part of me just wants him to be happy.

I never intended to hurt Ed or upset him. I really did care for him. But, I am none of the things he claims I am and I'm not catering to his unreasonable demands anymore.

This person really claims he's a mental health advocate but he abused and traumatized me and many others. When he talks about mental health, it's always exclusively in the context of his own

mental health, and not mental health in general. I wanted to express my experiences in full and tell others effected that you are not alone. Be careful who you talk to and meet online. I thought I was smart and knew about Internet safety from a young age, but I was wrong.

I want people, especially teenagers, to please take all this stuff about cyberbullying and Internet safety seriously. I don't want anyone to end up in the same situation. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. Even if the person is your best friend, if they start showing red flags like being abusive, entitled or creepy, even in subtle ways and especially if they are much older than you, get out of there as soon as you can. That is all for now. I am happy to answer any questions about all of this. I'm not going to be intimidated into silence and Ed can defend himself on his personal platforms all he likes. He doesn't have power over me anymore.

Now here's hoping Ed can live, learn and move forward from this.

I know I will, too. And escape the abyss.